International Canoe Federation Level 1- Online Assistant Canoe Sprint Coach Course

Presented by Gregory van Heerden ICF Level 1 accredited course Facilitator

Acknowledgements

The implementation of this course would not have been possible without the generous help and support of the following:

- The International Canoe Federation.

Course date

This online level 1 course was held over a two-week period (10th January 2025 to 24th January 2025), in a condensed approach made up of virtual engagement over Zoom, video content and theoretical coursework and three practical elements to ensure a transfer of theory to actual coaching application.

Course Outcomes and measurement

The purpose of the Level 1 course was to provide the coaches with the basic knowledge and skills needed to coach beginners in canoe/kayak. The course covered theory and three practical tasks.

On the completion of the course the coaches were able to:

- Provide a safe environment for paddling to take place
- Plan and conduct beginner lessons
- Plan and conduct a basic training session
- Teach balance, the basic technique of kayak paddling and steering
- Conduct basic physical conditioning training
- Prepare athletes for domestic level competition

In order to assess the coaches' knowledge and their practical ability to apply this they had to complete three practical assignments followed by a written exam comprising of 20 questions (a minimum of 16 correct responses was required in order to pass)

Furthermore, it is expected that all the coaches be compliant with the regulations of their National Governing body with respect to first aid, safeguarding and related screenings.

All the successful candidates shall receive a "Level 1 Assistant Canoe Sprint Coach" certificate from the International Canoe Federation.

Technique drills

Course content

The following content was covered in the course:

- Introduction to Canoeing, a short history of Canoeing, the definition, discipline descriptions and Canoe Sprint description
- Equipment; Boats, parts of the boats, paddles and accessories, handling of equipment
- Safety and Rescue; equipment, personal safety, injuries, methods of rescue
- The technique of canoeing; launching, balance, strokes of canoeing, basic paddling technique, steering
- Physical conditioning; endurance development and strength development
- Training and basic training methods; Why training is necessary, training loads, frequency and duration, long distance, fartlek, interval and complex training.
- Role of the coach; teaching skills and communication, coaching tools, methods and teaching beginners.
- Introducing racing; race course, racing rules, the goals and principles of racing

With the Practical component including three practical assignments:

- The demonstration and teaching of dryland canoe technique,
- Running a bodyweight training session, and
- The development and presentation of a periodised training program.

Bodyweight Practical demonstrations

Attendance

The course was attended by the following 2 Coaches. 1 from Australia and 1 from Hungary (on training camp in Australia), all of which met the attendance criteria:

1. Sabastian Wakim
2. Virag Balla

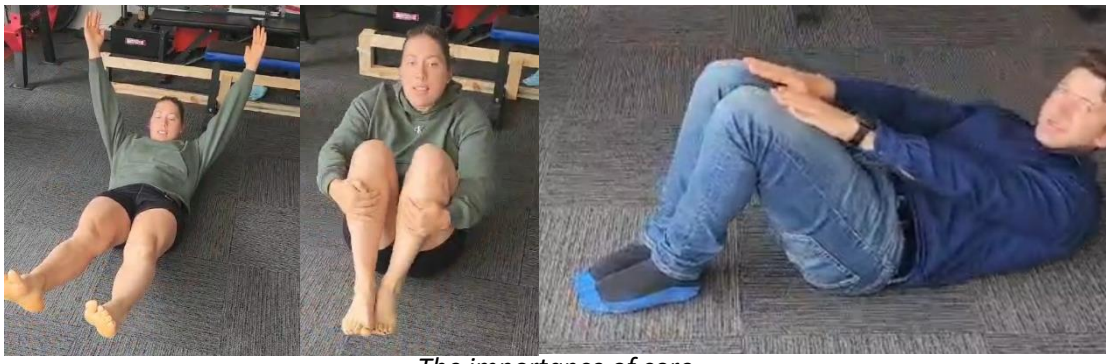
Results

All coaches passed the final test.

Facilitator Comments

The participants of this course consisted of a high-level canoe coach and an elite Canoe athlete on training camp in Australia. Both coaches showed a very high understanding of the theoretical elements around coaching, and a comprehensive sport specific knowledge especially in the canoe discipline.

Feedback at the end of the course indicated that the coaches' expectations were met.



The importance of core

Both coaches were able to incorporate all the necessary practical elements, with each submitting two brief videos as well as present an abridged training program across all sections of the standard training periodisation periods.

General Preparation (Pre-Season /Winter)		
	AM	**PM**
MONDAY	Swimming: 40' Technique	Running: 4x (3x 4'/2')
TUESDAY	Erg/ Pool Paddling	GYM - Strength
WEDNESDAY	Swimming: 20x 100m	off
THURSDAY	Running - 10km Cross Country	GYM - Strength
FRIDAY	Swimming: 6x 300m + 20'	Run: 3x 2km + Stretching
SATURDAY	GYM - Strength	off
SUNDAY	off	off

Specific Preparation		
	AM	**PM**
MONDAY	Paddling: 8km easy (with technique)	Paddling: 8x 6'
TUESDAY	GYM - Strength	off
WEDNESDAY	Paddling: 3x 2km Time Trial	Running: 8km cross country
THURSDAY	GYM - Strength	off
FRIDAY	Paddling: 12x 4'/2'	Stretching
SATURDAY	Paddling: 10km Time Trial	off
SUNDAY	off	off

Race Base		
	AM	**PM**
MONDAY	Paddling: 10km easy/steady	GYM - Strength
TUESDAY	Paddling: 2x 1km TT +Running	off
WEDNESDAY	Paddling: 4x (3x 2'/2')	GYM - Power/Explosive
THURSDAY	Paddling: 4x (8x 15"/45" with Resistance) +Running	off
FRIDAY	Paddling: 6x 4'/4'	GYM - Strength + Stretching
SATURDAY	Paddling: 2-3x 1000m/500m TT	off
SUNDAY	off	off

Example of submitted periodised training plan

In terms of understanding the theoretical aspects, I felt that due to the high standard of the coaches they had a firm grasp of the theory and how to apply this practically.

Getting strong

The following videos were added to the homework of the coaches from the ICF online lecture series:

https://www.canoeicf.com/icf-performance-education-free-online-series?utm_campaign=PerformanceEducation

- Difference between women's and men's training methods,
- Choosing a paddle for young kayak athletes,
- How to train your athletes to paddle faster,
- Anti-doping Education - Keeping canoeing clean.

Also shared was the link to the British Canoeing Awarding Body Digital library as this includes a number of useful resources:

https://britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/digital-library/

The importance of stretching

I am confident that both coaches have a strong understanding of the principles of coaching, a sound paddlesports knowledge base and the ability to apply this into the coaching space, helping to provide the guidance, training, enjoyment and performance outcomes needed by athletes and participants.